

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 507

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 9284

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, AU

SUBJECT: COMMENT OF EGYPTAIN AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA

REF: A. VIENNA 9131 B. VIENNA 9200

1. I HAD OCCASION MORNING NOVEMBER 9 TO SEE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR SALAH GOHAR WHOM I HAVE INFORMALLY MET ON SEVERAL PRIOR OCCASIONS. HE WAS MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT US-EGYPTIAN DECISION TO RE-ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND INDICATED HE LOOKED FORWARD TO BEING IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH US IN FUTURE.

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR CONVERSATION FOLLOW:

A. MEETING OF ARAB AMBASSADORS IN VIENNA:
GOHAR SAID RECENT MEETINGS (SEE REFTEL A) WERE NOT REPEAT NOT, AS REPORTED IN PRESS, TO DETERMINE WHETHER AUSTRIA WAS PRO-ARAB OR PRO-ISRAELI AND, ON SUCH BASIS, TO FURTHER DECIDE WHETHER OIL SHIPMENTS MIGHT BE LIMITED. INSTEAD, PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS TO DETERMINE WHAT ACTION TO TAKE IN VIEW OF FACT MANY PROMINENT GOA OFFICIALS INCLUDING PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENT, HEAD OF TRADE UNIONS, AND MAYOR OF VIENNA,
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HAD SIGNED BOOK OF SYMPATHY FOR ISRAEL.

DECISION WAS TAKEN TO CALL INDIVIDUALLY ON CHANCELLOR KREISKY, WHICH ALREADY DONE, TO EXPRESS EXTREME ARAB REGRET AND DISMAY OVER THIS DEVELOPMENT. KREISKY REPORTEDLY SAID ACTION OF GOA OFFICIALS WAS PRIVATE MATTER, AND THAT, AS ARABS MUST RECOGNIZE, HE HIMSELF HAS TAKEN A VERY BALANCED VIEW OF MID-EAST SITUATION. AMBASSADOR GOHAR APPEARED PARTIALLY SATISFIED WITH THIS EXPLANATION.

B. SAUDI ARABIAN OIL SUPPLIES TO US:
GOHAR SAID HE HAD HEARD BBC REPORT THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD CHANGED ITS MIND REGARDING CURTAILMENT OR EMBARGO OF OIL SUPPLIES TO UNITED STATES ON THEORY THAT THIS ACTION HAD BEEN IN SUPPORT OF EGYPT AND THAT, SINCE FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS HAD BEEN RE-ESTABLISHED, RAISON D'ETRE FOR PLANNED CUTBACK HAD DISAPPEARED. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY, HE SAID HE COULD NOT ASSURE THIS WAS HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION BUT THAT HE PERSONALLY WAS IN AGREEMENT WITH BBC REPORT. I MENTIONED THAT PROPOSED CURTAILMENT OF OIL SUPPLIES BY SAUDI ARABIA WOULD HAVE VERY ADVERSE EFFECT ON AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION, WHICH WOULD BE LAMENTABLE IN LONG RUN. HE FULLY AGREED WITH THIS STATEMENT AND FELT THAT AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION MUST BE VERY MUCH TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN CONNECTION WITH SUCH ACTION.

C. SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN LONDON, NOV 11:
GOHAR EXPRESSED MAJOR CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS AT SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL MEETING ADVERSE TO ARAB INTERESTS. HE INDICATED HE HAD HEARD THAT GOLDA MEIR MIGHT REPLACE AUSTRIAN PITTERMANN AS SECRETARY GENERAL AND THAT, IN ANY EVENT, SHE WOULD PROBABLY USE OCCASION TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE ISSUANCE OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE FAVORING ISRAEL IN ORDER TO COUNTER RECENT STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. I EXPRESSED VIEWPOINT THAT IN PAST CHANCELLOR KREISKY HAS PLAYED MODERATING ROLE IN COUNCILS OF SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL.
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D. ARABS' APPRAISAL OF SECRETARY:
WHEN I FIRST MET GOHAR BY CHANCE ON PLANE FROM LONDON TO VIENNA ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO, I TOLD HIM THAT, IN MY OPINION, SECRETARY HAD A VERY BALANCED VIEW OF MIDEAST SITUATION AND THAT, BEING A VERY REALISTIC AND SHREWD NEGOTIATOR, HE WOULD BE TOTALLY FAIR TO ARAB POSITION. AT

THAT TIME GOHAR EXPRESSED DOUBT ON THIS SUBJECT AND SAID THAT ARAB NATIONS FELT SECRETARY'S BACKGROUND WOULD INCLINE HIM TO FAVOR ISRAELIS, AN ASSESSMENT WHICH I TOLD HIM I FELT TO BE COMPLETELY WRONG. HE ADVISED ME TODAY THAT FOLLOWING OUR PLANE CONVERSATION HE HAD CABLED HIS GOVERNMENT NOT TO HAVE ANY PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS ABOUT SECRETARY AND HIS ATTITUDES. HE SAID THAT I HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN CORRECT SINCE MIDEAST COMPROMISE PEACE PLAN HAD BEEN AGREED UPON SO RAPIDLY.

3. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS APPROPRIATE.HUMES

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